



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**June 29, 2005**

## **DEQUINCY WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL DRUG AND FIREARM CHARGES**

LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA . . . JODIE LYNN SMITH, age 43, from Dequincy, Louisiana, pled guilty today before United States District Judge Donald Walters to possession with intent to distribute over five grams of cocaine base and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, announced United States Attorney Donald W. Washington and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Special Agent in Charge Mark Chait. SMITH was indicted in April 2005.

According to factual stipulations filed into the court records, SMITH was

convicted in state court in December 2003 of forgery and possession of cocaine and received a 5-year suspended sentence.

In November 2004, a Lake Charles Probation and Parole Officer was serving a warrant on SMITH for probation violations. SMITH was located in a hotel room at the Isle of Capri Hotel in Lake Charles, Louisiana. While serving the arrest warrant on SMITH, the officer observed drug paraphernalia in the room. The officer asked for and received permission to search the room. During the search, approximately 10 grams of crack cocaine and a Jennings .22 caliber pistol were found. SMITH admitted that the gun and drugs were hers.

This case was prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide program begun in 2001, and designed to reduce violence in our communities by aggressively using existing federal firearms laws. United States Attorneys, District Attorneys, Sheriffs, Police Chiefs, and state officials have created partnerships to address crimes involving firearms. Generally, any arrest involving a firearm is reviewed immediately by local, state and federal authorities to decide whether the case is best suited for prosecution under state

or federal law, or a combination of both. Project Safe Neighborhoods is expected to lead to longer prison terms for violent criminals, and a significant reduction in violent crime. To date, federal prosecutions under Project Safe Neighborhoods in the Western District of Louisiana have led to the incarceration of criminals responsible for violent crimes such as homicides, aggravated assaults, robbery, car jacking, burglary, and drug trafficking.

Sentencing will be scheduled for a later date to be determined by the Court. SMITH faces a minimum term of 5 years and a maximum term of 40 years imprisonment, a fine of not more than \$2,000,000, and a period of supervised release of not more than 4 years following confinement.

Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. United States Sentencing Guidelines established by the United States Congress and the United States Sentencing Commission are only used as guidelines by the judge in determining the appropriate sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This investigation was conducted by the Lake Charles Police Department's Violent Gun Crime Task Force known as "Operation

Triggertime,” in partnership with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and the United States Attorney’s Office under Project Safe Neighborhoods. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Howard C. Parker.

For further information, please contact United States Attorney Donald W. Washington at 337-262-6618 or First Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Flanagan at 318-676-3600.

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